

CYA

California Youth Authority

Delinquency Prevention Division

Special Edition

Fall 2001

www.cya.ca.gov

Today

Over 50 Years of Service to the People of California

Secretary Presley's Message on Delinquency Prevention



Robert Presley

It is important that Californians understand the critical role of the California Youth Authority (CYA) in preventing juvenile delinquency. Many people think of the Youth Authority as operating institutions, camps and parole services and are unaware of the many community prevention and intervention activities that are sponsored, funded or supported by the department. Early intervention and delinquency prevention is part of the mission of the Youth Authority.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the efforts of all the Youth Authority staff who make significant contributions, both personally and professionally, to delinquency prevention efforts throughout the state. It doesn't happen without you. Prevention and intervention are the best defenses against increased crime, and are clearly more cost effective than rehabilitation or incarceration.

As you read this second delinquency prevention edition of *CYA Today*, the Youth Authority's involvement in local communities throughout the state will be amplified. From mentoring, tattoo removal and parenting programs, to employment partnerships, the staff of the Delinquency Prevention Division of the Office of Prevention and Victims Services has linkages to at-risk California youth from rural northern counties to the densely populated areas of Southern California. People helping others. While a simple mission, it is one I believe is most effective in crime prevention.

I encourage each of you who read these articles to get involved—either by the "California Mentoring Partnership," led by California's First Lady Sharon Davis, or by supporting in some way a youth group in your community. Many of you already do so much in your local areas by coaching, tutoring, volunteering at your children's schools and, of course, providing positive parenting for your own children. However, there remain many more opportunities to partner in prevention programs.

Additionally, this is the time of the annual United California State Employees Campaign. You may want to consider pledging to a group that provides positive programming for at-risk youth. Every positive interaction we have with a child, either personally, or by giving financial support, reinforces delinquency prevention. It is important work that each of us needs to care about to ensure public safety in California—both for today and for the future.

Youth Authority's Delinquency Prevention Division Defined

Thousands of at-risk youth in California participate and benefit from after-school activities--tutoring, mentoring, shelter, counseling services and an array of other delinquency prevention programs. These programs improve their lives and prevent them from becoming involved in criminal activity, which often leads to prison, or even death. Did you know the California Youth Authority (CYA) oversees and insures that such activities and programs are provided to local communities? You, like many at-risk youth who take advantage of these services, probably didn't realize it is one of the responsibilities of the CYA. That's why it is our best-kept secret.

The Office of Prevention and Victims Services (OPVS) was created in 1992 to administer the CYA's delinquency prevention and victims services responsibilities. While the primary mission of the CYA revolves around maintaining custody of, and providing treatment, training and education for, wards of the juvenile court placed in its jurisdiction, the department established OPVS to acknowledge its responsibilities and support in crime and delinquency prevention and community and victim restoration.

The Delinquency Prevention Division (DPD) is responsible for leading the department's prevention efforts. This is accomplished through four specific programs and a variety of other activities. The four established programs are:

1. The County Correctional Facility Capital Expenditure and Youth Facility Bond Act of 1988 and the Juvenile and Gang Violence Prevention, Detention and Public Protection Act of 1998 provided nearly \$50 million in grant funding for Youth Centers and Youth Shelters.
2. Gang Violence Reduction Projects enlist the services of community-based programs, schools, and law enforcement to provide youth with positive alternatives to gang participation.

(Please see **PREVENTION**, Page 4)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

YA Collaborates	Page 2	LA Youth Network.....	Page 5
Prevention Funding.....	Page 2	Bay Area Partnership....	Page 5
Tulare GVRP.....	Page 2	Tattoo Removal.....	Page 6
Mentoring.....	Page 3	Young Men as Fathers..	Page 7
San Diego GVRP.....	Page 3	Overview of GVRP.....	Page 8
Youth Centers.....	Page 4	Gang Behaviors.....	Page 8

Dedication 2001

IN LOVING MEMORY OF YCO KENNY QUILENDERINO



Director Harper (l) presents Ken Quilenderino with the Youth Authority's Distinguished Service Award in Fall 2000 at the 70th Annual California Probation, Parole, and Correctional Association Conference. Mr. Quilenderino passed away on June 13, 2001.

The 2001 Delinquency Prevention Special Edition of *CYA Today* is dedicated in memory of O.H. Close Youth Correctional Facility Youth Correctional Officer Ken Quilenderino, affectionately known as "Kenny Q."

On June 13, 2001, the department lost a very valuable family member when Kenny Q. suffered a heart attack at O.H. Close Youth Correctional Facility. He passed away prior to his shift while playing basketball--something he enjoyed very much. Sadly, he leaves behind his beloved wife, Rossi, and two sons, Derek and Darin.

A life-long resident of Stockton, he graduated from Edison High School and eventually started working for the California Youth Authority as a janitor at the Northern California Youth Center in 1974. In 1981, he began his peace officer career at O.H. Close.

Kenny Q. quickly became one of the department's best-known "kid workers." His most notable achievement was his work with gang members and that is where he found his calling. He worked as the institution's Gang Information Coordinator (GIC) as a secondary assignment from 1986 to 1997. During this time, it became apparent he had a unique gift for dealing with the institution's most diverse and sophisticated ward population.

In 1997, Kenny Q. was appointed the first GIC at O.H. Close—he

was selected because of his exceptional knowledge in the field and his outstanding ability to relate to wards. His genuine concern for wards was obvious and a commonly heard comment from wards was, "I don't want to mess-up and disappoint Kenny Q."

Kenny Q. made an effort to know every ward in the institution on a first-name basis. His observations and interactions with the ward population enabled him to acquire an amazing amount of knowledge on the integral details of the gang sub-culture. He also had a valuable source of historical information

(Please see **KENNY Q.**, Page 8)

Youth Authority Collaborates to Achieve Results

By Kimberly Bushard, Delinquency Prevention Supervisor
Office of Prevention and Victims Services

In 1997, a two-day forum was held, entitled *Shifting the Focus: An Interdisciplinary Violence Prevention Approach for California*. It was so named because communities are often asked to collaborate and the government agencies involved recognized that such collaborative efforts are important for them as well. The meeting was designed as a springboard for collaboration between the disciplines of education, criminal justice and health, including women’s health, mental health and alcohol and drug abuse. Since collaborative efforts are vital to a comprehensive approach to preventing violence, *Shifting the Focus* aimed to clarify how governmental agencies and organizations with different mandates and perspectives can work together more effectively. Cooperative work can be difficult to accomplish, yet the results of such efforts promise benefits to agencies and organizations involved and, more importantly, the communities and clients they serve.

Shifting the Focus was the beginning of an important movement. Today we see much more collaboration at the state level on issues related to prevention programs and activities. The Department of the Youth Authority has been fortunate to be involved in many of these efforts, including *Shifting the Focus* and the various projects and committees listed below.

- In the delinquency prevention arena, few things are getting as much attention as the **Balanced and Restorative Justice** concept. Through concerted efforts to embed restorative justice principles in its daily operations, the Youth Authority emerged at the forefront of this movement and, as a result, recently had the opportunity to work with a multi-state collaborative funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

- For the past two years a group of state representatives have been meeting to discuss issues around mentoring and youth development. The Youth Authority has been a part of this group, known as the **State Agency Collaborative on Mentoring and Youth Development** (CMYD), since its inception. The primary goal of the group is to facilitate matches of one million quality mentors to California youth by 2005. Toward that end, the Collaborative developed numerous strategies among different state agencies to facilitate, promote and support mentoring in California.
- In June 2001, the Little Hoover Commission released its report, *Never Too Early, Never Too Late to Prevent Youth Crime and Violence*. This report presents six recommendations to prevent youth crime and violence in California. The Youth Authority participated in the development of this report through its membership on the Little Hoover Commission’s Youth Crime and Violence Prevention Advisory Committee.
- *Safe from the Start* is a program sponsored by the Attorney General’s Office, in collaboration with the Health and Human Services Agency. The Attorney General recognized the benefits to be gained through collaboration and called in a number of representatives from different organizations to participate in a *Safe from the Start* Advisory Council. The Youth Authority was invited to participate on this Advisory Council and thus had input into the *Safe from the Start Project* which is a comprehensive strategy to partner local and state policymakers from throughout the state to develop strategies for coordinating assistance for children victimized or exposed to violence. The goal of the project is to assist communities to improve the health and well-being of children exposed to violence and reduce the number of children exposed to violence.

Statewide Prevention Funding Gets Huge Boost

By Kimberly Bushard, Delinquency Prevention Supervisor
Office of Prevention and Victims Services

Last year, the Crime Prevention Act of 2000 (Act) provided \$242.6 million for crime prevention programs. These funds were divided evenly between community-oriented policing programs and juvenile justice programs. The Act redefines “front line enforcement services” to include a juvenile justice initiative with programs focusing on graduated sanctions for at-risk juveniles. In a significant show of support for this new program, the Legislature and governor acted this year to provide \$116.3 million on an on-going basis.

The “juvenile justice” portion of these funds must be used by each county to implement a comprehensive multi-agency juvenile justice plan. Programs proposed for funding as part of a county plan must be based on recipient approaches with demonstrated effectiveness in reducing delinquency and addressing juvenile crime through responses that include prevention, intervention, suppression and incapacitation. These programs

must integrate services of law enforcement, probation, education, mental health, physical health, social services, and drug and alcohol services.

The Board of Corrections is responsible for coordinating the development of the plan and approving each county’s plan. Additionally, the Board provides on-going technical assistance to counties to ensure successful implementation and operation of the programs and activities outlined, to encourage the sharing of information across counties, and to report the results of each plan. To date, the Board has responded to questions and provided technical assistance to 56 counties participating in this program.

For specific information on county programs, see: http://www.bdcorr.ca.gov/cpa2000/program_description.asp or call the Board of Corrections Program Director Fred Morawczinski at (916) 323-8627.

Tulare County GVRP Significantly Impacts Crime Reduction

By Carla D. Calhoun, Resource Development Coordinator
Community Services & Employment Training, Inc.

The California Youth Authority expanded its successful Gang Violence Reduction Project (GVRP) by awarding competitively bid contracts to Tulare and Monterey Counties in October 2000. This article describes how law enforcement and community-based organizations in Tulare County have implemented the proven GVRP model to improve opportunities for youth, make communities safer, and reduce gang violence. The model provides a comprehensive approach to achieving these goals through local multi-disciplinary partnerships and implementation of five components: gang mediation, alternative activities, victim awareness, information sharing, and community service.

Community Services & Employment Training, Inc. (C-SET) is the lead agency for Tulare County’s GVRP program, which includes the active participation of the Sheriff’s Office, Probation Department, District Attorney’s Office, Office of Education, local schools, community centers, and farm labor camps through the Tulare County Housing Authority. The project serves the three small, rural communities and labor camps of Ivanhoe, Woodville, and Linnell Camp, where youth and families are isolated from services and programs available in larger communities.

“We have witnessed a significant decrease in crime activity since we began GVRP,” said Sergeant Cheri Lehner, Tulare County Sheriff’s Department. “We couldn’t drive through Linnell Camp in a patrol car without getting shot at. Now, violence is non-existent. Kids and parents welcome us into their community.” Lehner attributes these positive changes to the daily presence of GVRP partners, from many different organizations, who are now involved in these communities on a daily basis. “All the partners care deeply about these kids, and the kids respond,” she said.

A strong youth leadership component is woven throughout the five program components, integrating leadership skills development, educational attainment, community pride, and exposure to a variety of educational, cultural, and recreational opportunities.

Gang mediation is provided through Probation’s Alternative Youth Support Group (AYSG). Weekly sessions are held with two age groups: 15 to 18-year-old teens who are on probation, and 5th and 6th grade at-risk youth. Probation and school staff work together to identify these younger

youth who are having problems in school. AYSG helps youth develop skills such as problem-solving, setting goals, interpersonal communication, conflict resolution, and avoiding gang involvement. Victim awareness and the importance of education are also covered. Many AYSG participants go on to join Jr. Leadership and become active citizens in their communities. “Since the beginning of this program, communication between law enforcement and the schools has improved, and fewer students are getting in trouble at school,” reports George Luna, a probation officer who facilitates AYSG sessions. “These kids are happy to see me, and they stick around to talk after each session.”

Alternative Activities involve all ages in a variety of activities provided after school, on weekends, and during the summer. Youth in the three communities have eagerly joined in the activities, and even current gang members have taken an interest in the program. “I’ve watched a tough, passive young man, who initially hung back and just listened, become a leader, a volunteer—a young man who wants to make positive changes in his life,” shared Angel Avitia, C-SET Youth Development Coordinator, in Linnell Camp. “I expect to help him fill out college scholarship applications next year.”

Activities began with the formation of Jr. Leadership groups in each community. Jr. Leaders learned the skills to orchestrate events, the importance of education, and developed pride and respect for their communities. After completing a ropes course and other team building activities, Jr. Leaders started planning events and service projects, including community and graffiti clean-ups, movie nights, community-wide celebrations, and theater productions. These events are promoted and operated as drug-free, alcohol-free, and violence-free activities; and residents of all ages have voiced their appreciation for these healthy, safe opportunities.

A range of professionals serves as guest speakers to youth and community audiences. Speakers provide information on topics including avoiding gangs, career options, teen-dating violence, and victim awareness. Others share personal experiences, challenges they have encountered, and how they overcame them to succeed. Older teens give advice to younger students who are bound for high school. Youth and their parents are also taken

(Please See **TULARE GANG VIOLENCE REDUCTION PROJECT, Page 3**)



Mentoring: A Little Time Makes a Big Difference

By Harvey Casillas, Delinquency Prevention Specialist
Office of Prevention and Victims Services

The Governor's Office and First Lady Sharon Davis have launched a new State Employees Mentor Recruitment Campaign and all state agencies and departments have been asked to help improve the lives of California youth. The California Mentoring Partnership, formerly known as the California Mentor Initiative, was created to increase public awareness about the benefits of mentoring; and through this increased awareness, ultimately recruit one million mentors by the year 2005.

As a state employee, you are already committed to improving California and are making meaningful contributions every day. But you may have a vague sense of wanting to give something back to your community and aren't sure of the best way to do it. Perhaps you aren't sure you have the time or that you can make an impact. This article will provide some basic information about the program and how to get started.

What is mentoring? Mentoring is defined as a relationship over an extended period of time between two or more people where the older, wiser, more experienced individual assists the younger person during the formative years. The mentor provides support, guidance, and friendship to the minor, and hopefully, decreases his/her chances of exposure to at-risk behaviors, including teen pregnancy, academic failure, gangs and violence, and alcohol and drug usage. Studies have shown these invaluable relationships significantly improve academic performance, while reducing the chances of the mentee becoming involved in risky or criminal behaviors.

As an incentive, most state collective bargaining agreements now allow for mentor leave. The provisions allow "eligible state employees," as defined by the Department of Personnel Administration, to receive up to

40 hours of paid matching time per calendar year to volunteer as mentors. However, due to public safety, health and budget limitations, Department of Corrections and Youth Authority "post" employees, as well as employees in state 24-hour care facilities, are excluded from receiving paid matching time-off for mentoring. These employees are still encouraged to become mentors during non-working hours.

Currently, employees in bargaining unit numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 19, and 21 have contracts that include the mentoring leave benefit. The employee must have a permanent full-time appointment, complete probation in their current position, and commit to mentor a youth through a "Quality Assurance" approved mentor program for a minimum of one year. Please contact your Personnel Office if you have any questions regarding your bargaining unit or your eligibility for mentoring leave.

The Governor's Office and the First Lady believe that mentoring will strengthen our state with minimum investment and tremendous reward for generations to come for the mentor, mentee, and communities in California. All state employees are asked to consider becoming personally involved to change the life of a young person in your community. In addition, all state departments have designated a Mentor Coordinator to recruit and assist employees in their department to become mentors.

If you are interested in more information about mentoring, please contact Harvey Casillas, Youth Authority Mentor Coordinator at (916) 262-1392 or hcasillas@cya.ca.gov. For other mentoring information, visit the following websites: www.opr.ca.gov, www.adp.ca.gov, or www.calmentor.org or call the California Mentoring Partnership at (916) 445-9468.

Successful Fundraiser Held for San Diego Gang Project

By Officer Ben Jolly II, Project Coordinator, San Diego Police Department

The San Diego Gang Violence Reduction Project (GVRP) is one of four Gang Violence Reduction Projects administered through the Youth Authority's Office of Prevention and Victims Services (OPVS). The core elements of the GVRP projects are gang-conflict mediation, information sharing between various agencies including law enforcement, services for victims of gang violence, community service, and alternative activities to gang involvement for at-risk youth.

On April 30, 2001, the San Diego GVRP performed a sensational play "I AM" at the La Jolla Playhouse. "Powerful," "moving," and "uplifting," are just a few of the words used to describe the play.

The La Jolla Playhouse teaching artist James Saba worked with the youth for sixteen weeks preparing them for the play. Saba's time was paid by the La Jolla Playhouse. Eighteen middle school youth from Roosevelt and Memorial Academy wrote and starred in this play about their lives and

the challenges they face in San Diego's inner city. Many of the youth had never acted before.

Performing in front of an audience of approximately 500 people, these kids put their lives on the line in an effort to help the fundraising campaign for San Diego's GVRP. On the night of the performance, with OPVS staff in attendance, Union Bank of San Diego donated a check for \$7,500 for the continuation of the program. However, they will need more money to continue operating after the YA grant funds end.

More than 15,000 youth, mostly from Logan Heights and surrounding neighborhoods, have taken advantage of the three-year project. The San Diego GVRP tries to get youth to leave gangs through a variety of after-school programs. San Diego Police Officer Ben Jolly II is the project coordinator of this program in partnership with three community-based programs — *SAY San Diego*, *Mediation and Restitution Services*, and *Partners In Prevention Education and Recovery*.

Tulare Gang Violence Reduction Project...(From Page 2)

on college tours and to other events, such as a Hispanic Business Conference, that encourage them to aim high and recognize their future possibilities.

"Kids in Woodville watch for my car to pull into town and run to greet me," shared Lily Rivera, C-SET Youth Development Coordinator. Kelly Ryan of Tulare County Office of Education echoed Rivera's experiences: "GVRP staff are pied pipers. Kids in these communities were hungry for positive role models and alternatives to gang activity. This program fills a tremendous void."

Victim Awareness education is provided to a variety of audiences by the District Attorney's Office and Probation staff. Teens on probation learn the consequences of victimization, as well as communication and anger management skills that help change violent behaviors and prevent victimization. Community-wide meetings are held to inform the public about the criminal justice system, support systems, and resources that help victims. Jr. Leadership members learn about the consequences of violence on individuals and their communities, as well as effective tools for preventing violence, such as listening and mediation skills.

Information Sharing among partners occurs twice a month, and participating staff routinely communicate to discuss at-risk youth, share information on gang activity, and coordinate events. "When one of us plans an event, all of the partners show up to help, even on their own time," explained Diva Larez, C-SET's Youth Development Coordinator in Ivanhoe. Bob Felts, Director of the Ivanhoe Youth Center, added that it is common for a partner to jump in when a need is recognized. Felts explained that Deputy Bob Lewis, a Community-Based Officer, initiated a soccer clinic when youth expressed their interest. The Center hopes to start a soccer

league in this community where no organized sports exist. The active participation of partners opens doors to other opportunities for GVRP youth, such as the Sheriff's Explorer program, C-SET summer camps and Youth Corps programs, and Tulare County Office of Education's educational opportunities.

Partners also recognize the need to expand this successful model to other rural communities within the county. "We have all witnessed how meaningful this model is to our youth," said Mary Alice Escarsega, who oversees GVRP through C-SET's Workforce Development and Community Building Department. "As partners, we have become a family, and we have seen what is possible when we work together. We are building bridges that allow youth to connect with positive adults from diverse backgrounds."

Community Service is integral to leadership development and allows youth an avenue for practicing new skills. For example, after learning about the negative influences of gang involvement, Linnell Camp youth led the effort to remove gang images from an existing mural, replacing them with images depicting the contributions and progress of farmworkers. Jr. Leaders planned the mural's dedication as part of a community-wide Cesar Chavez Day celebration, and several youth presented speeches – for the first time – on the importance of education and goal setting.

"As parents and residents see youth involved in improving their communities, they become involved," explained Escarsega. "These communities have not only become safer through GVRP—community pride is growing, and everyone benefits."

Youth Centers and Shelters—A CYA Community Link

By Kimberly Bushard, Delinquency Prevention Unit Supervisor
Office of Prevention and Victims Services

In the past 12 years, the Youth Authority has received two different budget augmentations for the purpose of providing grant funds to local youth centers and shelters. The first augmentation was provided through the County Correctional Facility Capital Expenditure and Youth Facility Bond Act of 1988. This bond act provided \$25 million for acquisition, construction, renovation, and equipping of youth centers and shelters. Youth centers bring together children ages 6 to 17 for programs and activities including recreation, counseling, youth leadership, and employment training. Shelters provide a variety of services to runaway or homeless minors, and abused/neglected children to assist them with their immediate survival needs and help reunite them with their families or find another suitable home. Forty one youth centers and 28 youth shelters were funded through four allocations. Because these are grants of public funds, the law requires continuous monitoring of these programs for up to 20 years, depending on the amount of the grant award and the nature of the project. Thus, the department continues to be involved with many of these programs even though the initial funding was provided 12 years ago.

The Juvenile and Gang Violence Prevention, Detention, and Public Protection Act of 1998 made available \$25 million for allocation by the department to nonprofit agencies to acquire, renovate and construct youth centers. These youth centers bring together 6 to 21 year olds for services and activities including recreation, health and fitness, citizenship and leadership development, job training, anti-gang programs, teen pregnancy prevention programs, and counseling for problems such as drug and alcohol abuse. In August 1999, funds were awarded to 21 youth centers in 16 counties.

When youth are involved in structured, interesting activities during non-school hours, they are less likely to start drinking and doing drugs, less likely to become involved with gangs, less likely to skip school, and far more likely to graduate from high school and go on to college. Youth centers offer youth an excellent opportunity to get engaged in positive activities after school. In addition to the “standard” program elements mentioned above, youth centers may also offer mentoring, tutoring, culinary arts, gardening, computer skills training, music, arts and a wide variety of other activities.

Youth shelters provide an essential service by getting runaway, homeless, abused and neglected youth off the streets and into meaningful programs designed to help them overcome obstacles to completing their education, obtaining employment and becoming productive citizens. Many shelters are operated in conjunction with youth centers, allowing sheltered youth to take advantage of the full range of youth center programs and services when they are not in school or otherwise involved in activities related to attaining family reunification or independent living.

It is easy to see from the above that youth centers and shelters serve complementary purposes. Moreover, they each play a critical role in a comprehensive youth development approach to prevention by strengthening the protective factors that will keep youth safe and crime-free. Youth Authority staff work with all grant-funded programs to provide technical support and assistance. They also perform on-going monitoring to ensure that publicly-funded projects continue to be utilized for the intended purpose. So, what is the link between community-based youth centers and shelters and the California Youth Authority?

The primary mission of the Youth Authority revolves around maintaining custody of, and providing treatment, training and education for, wards of the juvenile court placed in its jurisdiction. Additionally, in 1992, the department established the Office of Prevention and Victims Services (OPVS) to acknowledge its responsibilities and support for crime and delinquency prevention and community and victim restoration. The CYA operates institutions and parole offices within various communities throughout California; and where these institutions and parole offices exist, employees are part of that community, as well. Similarly, local government agencies and community-based organizations

Prevention Division...(From Page 1)

3. Young Men as Fathers Parenting/Mentoring Programs utilize parenting education, mentoring and family activities to train youth involved in the juvenile justice system to be better parents. This program is based on the premise that prevention of child maltreatment can lead to prevention of future delinquency.

4. Tattoo Removal Programs provide free tattoo removal services to at-risk youth referred by community-based organizations with the intent of removing one barrier (tattoos) to future employment and law-abiding behavior.

In addition to administering the above programs, DPD staff are actively involved in a wide variety of other activities that support and enhance statewide delinquency prevention efforts. This includes providing delinquency prevention training and presentations for schools, community service organizations and faith groups – using CYA wards or parolees when appropriate.

It also includes developing community service projects for wards and parolees by collaborating with community-based organizations, parks and recreation offices, schools, churches, and city governments. Thus, while the department is involved at the state level in maintaining custody of some of the state’s most serious and violent juvenile offenders, it is involved at the local level in administering programs meant to reduce the number of juvenile offenders who choose a life of crime and end up incarcerated

Finally, the DPD provides staff support and resources to the State Commission on Juvenile Justice, Crime and Delinquency Prevention. The commission is charged with inspecting CYA institutions, advising the director on departmental programs and delinquency prevention, and acting as a liaison between the CYA and the public. DPD staff assist the 16 commissioners in accomplishing this work.

For additional information, please contact the Office of Prevention and Victims Services at (916) 262-1392.



Youth Centers provide many recreational activities for at-risk youth, such as this neighborhood park festivity.

operate youth centers and shelters within these same communities to provide delinquency prevention related programs and services to the residents. While local youth serving agencies are likely to be more focused on primary prevention efforts, the department is focused on providing treatment and training that will prevent its offenders from re-offending. For both the CYA and locally-based programs, the underlying goal is improving the lives of those served and making the community a better place for all citizens.

All wards committed to CYA someday will be returned to their local communities. When this happens, the CYA wants them to feel a part of that community, to be an active, productive and law-abiding citizen. In the same way, CYA wants at-risk and runaway youth to feel a part of their communities. For both groups, a community’s ability to foster feelings of belonging, attachment, and investment will directly contribute to that community’s ability to maintain a safe and crime-free home for its residents. In realizing the CYA and community-based prevention programs are working toward similar and related goals, it becomes clear that a working relationship between the two makes a good deal of sense. This is one of the things OPVS is actively working toward.

OPVS provides financial support to many different youth centers and shelters in a number of different communities across the state. These grant awards are just the beginning of OPVS’ work with these programs. For example, the Boys & Girls Clubs of greater Sacramento recently received funds to construct a new youth center. OPVS staff are working with the Sacramento Parole Office to develop a collaborative relationship that will be beneficial for both organizations by providing services to the Boys & Girls Club and provide recreational and instructional space, as well as speaking, tutoring and community service opportunities, for parolees. OPVS hopes to see this type of collaboration spread to other communities across the state.

Hollywood Free Clinic...(From Page 6)

“I have seen some of the damage that gang-related tattoos can cause,” says Lance Huddleston, RN. Huddleston has been volunteering his services for HSFC’s tattoo removal program for the last two years. He also works at LAC/USC County Medical Center, and has seen people come into the hospital after they have been shot because rival gang members spotted their tattoos.

The stories continue:

A woman, who was forced by her ex-husband to get his name tattooed on her chest, came to HSFC for counseling services after being in a long-term abusive relationship. The woman and her counselor determined that her tattoo was a major source of her emotional distress and as a result, she was referred to the tattoo removal program. Since this constant visible reminder has been removed, she has been able to move on with her life.

“One of the youth clients wanted his tattoos removed after leaving his gang,” notes HSFC Clinic Supervisor Juan Flores. “Removing his tattoos helped him regain his confidence and self-esteem, and he is now in college. The program really helped him transition into young adulthood.”

“We are also treating two brothers (formerly incarcerated gang members). They are in the process of removing their tattoos and have been participating in youth diversion and outreach activities to help prevent other youth from entering gangs,” adds HSFC Project Counselor Juan Roca.

“We had a 20 year-old male who found that the tattoo on his neck was a barrier to job promotion,” says Patricia Rodriguez Program Manager for HSFC’s pioneering *Cara a Cara Latino Aids/HIV Education* program. “Once he had the tattoos removed, he was able to find a better job and it encouraged him to enroll in school.”

Other grant-making organizations find great value in the tattoo removal program. For example, the S. Mark Taper Forum has donated \$25,000, the George Hoag Family Foundation and the Roth Family Foundation each donated \$10,000 to help HSFC fund the laser tattoo removal program.

Lastly, these services are desperately needed. Two of HSFC’s CYA tattoo removal participants tried to remove their tattoos themselves – one tried to burn his off and the other tried to scrape his off with a knife. Thanks to the support of CYA and other grantors, these and other youth can have their tattoos removed safely by medical professionals.

More than 1 in 4 robberies with juvenile victims occur between 3 p.m. and 9 p.m. on school days



Los Angeles Youth Network: Preventing Delinquency, One Youth at a Time

By Mindi Levins-Pfeifer, Director of Public Relations, Los Angeles Youth Network

The mission of Los Angeles Youth Network (LAYN) is “ending homelessness one youth at a time,” but in terms of its approach to delinquency prevention, the mission is the same. Funding from the California Youth Authority helped open the shelter and drop-in center that allows LAYN to run programs, offering options to youth at risk of delinquency. More than 600 young people walk through the doors and obtain services. Without LAYN’s ability to provide food, clothing, tutoring, counseling and shelter, many of these young people would be forced into activities like prostitution, drug dealing, and theft, often leading to a lifetime of criminal activity.

For this reason, one of LAYN’s most important delinquency prevention projects is the *Youth Assistant Program*. Here, formerly homeless youth can obtain a good job, full health and vacation benefits, and the work experience to gain employment in a field that can begin to build a career for their future.

The idea for the program came about six years ago when Elizabeth Gomez, the executive director of the Los Angeles Youth Network, was brainstorming with staff about helping a few clients find jobs. It was clear that their possibilities were very limited, particularly with the clients’ lack of: work history, education, interview skills and job references. These young people were having difficulty getting hired at local retail stores, and even, at local fast food restaurants. Their self-esteem was already low due to their home histories, or abuse and neglect, as well as their lack of family support and involvement in the system. The rejection on the market made them feel inadequate.

From that, the *Youth Assistant Program* was born. The *Youth Assistant Program* employs young people who have transitioned out of the Los Angeles Youth Network programs and are living in somewhat stable environments. The program can continue two years and is both an employee program and a mentoring program. While the employee assists other youth at risk, the agency helps the young person with needed job and life skills. Program participants must be in a school program, work on their resumes and job skills and, if appropriate, work towards a driver’s license. They are also encouraged to participate in therapy out of the agency through their health insurance. The job schedule is flexible to accommodate these other priorities--however, the job always comes first and “responsibility” is the main focus of the program.

The best part of the job comes as these young people start to feel a real sense of pride in the fact that they are making a difference. One young man who is currently employed as a Youth Assistant is Derrick Russell. Derrick

The violent victimization of juveniles is greatest between 3 p.m. and 9 p.m., while adult victimizations are most common between 9 p.m. and midnight



gave permission to use his real name and is proud of where he is today. He says that he never realized until recently why he was born into this life. He was ending up homeless, involved in juvenile delinquent acts, incarcerated, and at times alone. His realization was that he was put on this earth to help prevent other young people from going through what he had, to pass a positive message and to make an impact in just one other young person’s life.

Derrick’s family moved around a lot when he was young. His parents separated and he stayed with his father. His father tried to support Derrick and one of his siblings, but due to his own issues, could not handle the responsibility. He did know enough to try to get his sons help and connected them with the Los Angeles Youth Network in 1992, when Derrick was 15. Derrick stayed at the shelter on and off, with his father part-time, and on the streets sometimes. He realized soon that his father could not take care of him and he had to survive on his own. This led Derrick to a life involving illegal activities, which eventually caught up with him and led to incarceration. Being locked-up changed Derrick’s life and made him realize he needed to reach out to people and places where he could make a positive change. This is when he returned to Los Angeles Youth Network. Derrick had worked there once before, but left to return to his family. Staff knew he had a good heart and much potential and rehired him into the *Youth Assistant Program*.

Today, Derrick is a model employee, a role model to youth and an example for all. He is thinking about college, recently purchased a car and loves to write music after work. He touches the lives of young people and adults daily. His genuineness makes other at-risk youth comfortable to open up to him; his honest and sincere manner makes one believe that with a chance, change is possible. Derrick is the reason that the *Youth Assistant Program* works and why LAYN understands that **the key to preventing delinquency is one youth at a time.**

Bay Area’s Youth Employment Partnership, Inc. Plans Expansion

By Amy Corbin

Development Assistant, Youth Employment Partnership

The Youth Employment Partnership, Inc. (YEP) is the San Francisco Bay Area’s largest youth job training organization and annually serves 800 low-income individuals between the ages of 14 and 29. Recently, YEP has taken on the most ambitious project in its 28-year history — the development of an Oakland Youth Center.

Thanks to the generosity of the California Youth Authority and one of YEP’s for-profit partners, “*Give Something Back*,” the program was able to purchase a building in Oakland’s San Antonio neighborhood. The 24,600-square-foot warehouse was once a furniture fabrication and sales facility, a design that makes it ideal for YEP’s needs. With a few separate rooms, the majority of space was a large open area, providing the flexibility to design a floorplan with classrooms of various sizes.

The furniture warehouse area has been put to use as a training area for construction programs and will allow development of a cabinetry operation and other entrepreneurial activities such as a cyber café. Its location is in the geographic center of the city, close to the city’s three enterprise zones and to the communities served. The San Antonio neighborhood will also soon be the site of several new Oakland public schools. In conjunction with the school district, YEP’s presence on the main thoroughfare will serve to bring some much-needed activities and energy to the neighborhood.

One of the major principles behind this project is youth input and participation in the creation of the center. The concept is driven by the response received from young people and community members, who feel that Oakland needs a comprehensive, public center for youth development activities. YEP is ideally situated to fulfill this need. With expansion, YEP was able to provide staff for everything from simple summer job programs to an array of job training options and support services, such as GED tutoring and behavioral counseling. With the additional warehouse building, YEP will be able to develop additional services to achieve a comprehensive, one-stop location to serve Oakland youth with their educational, behavioral, vocational, and recreational needs.

The center will provide a variety of different activities that give the young people of Oakland positive alternatives to unemployment or criminal activity. In the short term, it will allow YEP to consolidate its job training activities from two different sites into one and give it the space needed for enlarged summer job orientations. This has improved staff communication and efficiency, as well as provided enough space to run multiple programs simultaneously.

Beyond the immediate benefits of the new building, however, is the opportunity to expand in exciting ways. YEP will undertake a feasibility study that will inform a community planning process to determine the exact nature of the final youth center design. With a multi-faceted facility, a wide variety of services could be offered, including: transitional housing for youth at risk of homelessness; art and community space; classrooms; offices for other nonprofit organizations; and after-hours tutoring.

A careful planning process will result in a youth center that provides a positive outlet for Oakland youth, offers a holistic range of services, and gives young people a permanent place in their own community. The new building allows YEP to improve the quality of its current programs and to expand in a way that is consistent with the needs of the community.

Youth get hands-on experience through Youth Authority funded programs, such as the Youth Employment Partnership, Inc.



YA Helps with Tattoo Removals in Los Angeles, Orange and San Diego Counties

By Carol Barker, Delinquency Prevention Supervisor
Office of Prevention and Victims Services

In the late 1990's, two senate bills were enacted that require the Youth Authority (YA) to purchase laser tattoo removal machines and place them in designated counties throughout California. Currently, the YA provides oversight to tattoo removal programs in Los Angeles, Orange and San Diego counties. In the near future, there will also be programs in the Bay Area and in Fresno.

The objective of the tattoo removal program is to enhance employment and educational opportunities for at-risk youth. In exchange for removing offensive or gang-related tattoos free of charge, participants must be involved in constructive activities such as school, employment, vocational training and community service activities. It has been shown that by removing these tattoos and facilitating activities long proven to be cornerstones of productive citizens, public safety is enhanced.

Eligible youth must either live or work in the designated counties and be under the age of twenty-five. For males, tattoos are removed from the lower arm, hand, neck and head areas. For females, tattoos for removal must be visible in a professional work environment. The presence of the tattoo must be deemed to present either a threat to the personal safety of the individual, or an obstacle to employment. Priority is given to youth who have a job offer that is contingent upon removal of the tattoo.

Tattoos last longer than passing fancies, than first loves or gang affiliations, longer than fashions or fads. Many people, of course, are happy with their tattoos and never regret getting them. Some see them as a part of their identity or style. But many others see them as a link to a time and place they left long ago.

Removal of a tattoo may require as few as three, or as many as ten treatments, depending on the complexity. Factors influencing the complexity of a tattoo include size, depth, intensity of the ink, line width, and color of ink. Treatments must be scheduled six to eight weeks apart to allow the tissue to heal. The programs have found that the average tattoo is approximately 2" x 2" and it takes approximately 6-7 months to be removed.

The grant recipients have established partnerships that involve a collaboration of law enforcement, delinquency prevention agencies, local educators, and licensed health care professionals to aid in identification and referral of potential clients.

To find out more information about tattoo removal in your area call: Family Health Centers of San Diego (619) 515-2366; Hollywood Sunset Free Clinic (323) 660-7959; Orange County Probation Department (714) 569-3796; and Shields Medical Clinic of Los Angeles (323) 754-3445. To request a listing of statewide tattoo removal programs, email cbarker@cya.ca.gov.

Hollywood Sunset Clinic Has Removed 1,200 Tattoos Since 1998

By Celia Garza, RN
Ravi K. Bhatia, Consultant
Hollywood Sunset Free Clinic

"I'm really glad you're here," said a twenty-year-old female after one of her tattoo removal treatments – at the Hollywood Sunset Free Clinic (HSFC) – to remove a large gang-related tattoo on her back. Not only were the tattoos a reminder of former gang involvement, but rival gang members assumed she was still affiliated with a gang, making her a target for harrassment and potential violence. Now that her tattoos have been removed, gang members no longer bother her and it is easier for her to find employment.

This is the third year that the California Youth Authority has funded the Community Laser Tattoo Removal Program at HSFC. The primary reasons participants seek tattoo removal is because they are maturing, wish to leave gangs, and seek employment. The participants are typically under 25 years old and some of them have been gang members involved in drug-use and other illicit activities.

All participants commit to performing a minimum of 30 hours of community service before receiving the laser treatment. The target population is predominantly Latino (approximately 75 percent), with a substantial number of Asians.

The community-based Tattoo Removal Program was established in 1998 with the passage of Senate Bill 526, introduced by then State Senator Tom Hayden. Since the inception of the program in October 1998, HSFC has performed 11,326 laser treatments and removed 1,188 tattoos. In other words, enough tattoo ink to cover the skin surface of two grown adults has been removed! An average tattoo is 2 inches by 2 inches.

"It is a multi-disciplinary team of doctors, nurses, physician assistants (PA), health educators and counselors that make up the tattoo removal program at HSFC. They are Drs. Stephen Lee and Steven Popkow; Celia Garza, RN; Lance Huddleston, RN; Terry Saunders, PA; and volunteers, Carlos Echeverria, Juan Flores, Adriana Grandpre, Delia Lopez, Juan

Roca, Patty Rodriguez, Brenda Rubalcaba, Hugo Torres, and Rosario Villalobos," explains HSFC Executive Director Tacy Padua.

The tattoo removal program fills a very basic need for the program participants, especially at-risk youth. Many of the youth, once they get older, start families of their own; and although they have left their gangs, find it difficult to transition into main stream society. The tattoos, gang-related or not, provide barriers to social acceptance and employment.

"So many individuals need this service and, without our program, they could not afford to have these tattoos removed," explains Celia Garza, RN, medical administrator at HSFC. "And for some of the youth, it's a life-saving service as well, because if they go into certain neighborhoods they may be killed."

According to Brenda Rubalcaba, a medical assistant at HSFC, sometimes when a youth is walking down the street, a member of another gang will approach them and ask, "where are you from?" If the reply is "nowhere" the other gang member(s) may force them to remove their shirt. If they do not have a tattoo, they are left alone. If they do have a gang-related tattoo, they are harassed and oftentimes beaten for being in another gang's neighborhood.

Other tattoo removal participants just want to find a better job and visible tattoos are a hindrance. For example, a female client wanted her non-gang related tattoo removed so she could go to school to become a flight attendant. She is now employed as a flight attendant.

(Please See **HOLLYWOOD FREE CLINIC**, Page 4)



Approximately half of Tattoo Removal Program participants are female. Because of the different work attire required for females, the program provides for tattoos to be removed from their shoulders and ankles.

Orange County Tattoo Removal Program: Changing Lives, One Tattoo at a Time

By Randy Niznik Sr., Supervising Probation Office
Orange County Probation Department

"Robert" stood in the U.S. Army recruiter's office looking down at the tattoo on his hand. Army regulations forbid tattoos on a soldier's hands. In a very real sense, his tattoo was all that stood between Robert and a job he could be proud of, the chance for an education and a way out of the life he had grown to despise.

The tattoo wasn't even something that Robert had put there himself and learned to regret. It was a tattoo of a marijuana leaf that his abusive father had burned into his hand when he was just 11 years old. Nevertheless, regardless of the cause of the tattoo, the recruiter had no choice but to simply reject him. It was one of the lowest points in Robert's life.



Through the Orange County Probation Department, this youth is having his tattoos removed with a tattoo laser machine funded by the Youth Authority.

However, his luck was about to change. Robert saw an advertisement at his local community center for Orange County Probation's Tattoo Removal Program and called the number. From there, a deputy probation officer listened to Robert's situation and made sure that he was enrolled in the program.

While several treatments are typically needed, the tattoo on Robert's hand had lightened enough, after only one treatment, that he was accepted into the Army. "His whole life is going to be different because of this," said Robert's aunt after speaking to him in basic training. "For the first time, when talking to him, I heard something wonderful in his voice: direction and more importantly, hope. Hope for a productive and fulfilling future."

(Please see **ORANGE COUNTY**, Page 7)

An Overview and Update of the Young Men as Fathers Program

Suzanne Neuhaus, Delinquency Prevention Specialist, Office of Prevention and Victims Services

The Youth Authority’s (YA) Young Men as Fathers/Positive Parenting Program (YMAF/PPP) provides parenting programming to young men housed in YA institutions and on parole in the community, as well as in county juvenile detention facilities and schools.

The program is based on the belief that child maltreatment is closely linked to later delinquency and can be prevented: that both parents are responsible for the proper planning and development of every young child, and young delinquent men have to be made more accountable for their parenting obligations; and that being an involved parent is good for self-esteem and can be a motivating factor for a successful, law-abiding life.

The YMAF/PPP program makes use of current video productions and other materials designed to communicate effectively with the target audience. Culturally-sensitive classroom material (60-hour institution and 20-hour parole)

was developed with input from YA staff, outside parenting experts, and wards who are fathers. The institution curriculum has also been translated into Spanish so the classes can be taught to Spanish-speaking wards in their own language. In 1993, grant funding was awarded to implement the program in four Youth Authority institutions; and in 1998, state funds were allocated to ensure that the program be taught in all Youth Authority institutions, camps, and parole offices.

In 1997, Gov. Wilson directed that funds be allocated to establish YMAF/PPP programs in juvenile detention facilities and alternative schools in 26 counties in California. The YA currently provides leadership to 15 counties for cooperative partnerships between states, county probation departments, and county offices of education. Young Men as Fathers Programs are currently operating in the following counties: Humboldt, Imperial, Kings, Los Angeles, Madera, Napa, Placer, Riverside, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, Shasta, Sonoma, Sutter, and Yolo.

Napa County’s ‘POPPA’ Helps Boys Become Men

By Ron Beverly, Jr., Project Coordinator, Napa County POPPA

What if Napa County law enforcement and education officials worked together to identify young Napa men who need help learning from their mistakes? Would they make better decisions and lead better lives? Would they become more supportive fathers? Would their families benefit? Would our community become stronger in the process?

Yes, all of that would happen. And it is happening thanks to a program whose graduates were honored with a dinner recently at the Chardonnay Golf Club in Napa. *Providing for Outstanding Paternity and Parenting Ability* (POPPA) is a program co-sponsored by the Napa County Office of Education and Napa County Probation Department, with help from the California Youth Authority, *Our Family Inc.*, and Chamberlain High School.

The dinner featured skits by young men who have made a conscious decision to change their actions and behaviors. The decisions they are making today will have a lasting impact on their futures, families and communities.

In its first two years, the program helped 280 young men develop a sense of responsibility to others and respect for themselves and the community that supports them.

In its third year, the program hopes to enroll another 150 young men in the

14-unit violence prevention and teen-parenting program conducted by program specialist Ron Beverly Jr. and mentor coordinator Paul Contreras.

“I learned to think before I speak or act, but not to react,” one graduate told the audience. Another spoke about his involvement at age 11 with gangs and drugs, in a home without a father or any other role model. Now, thanks to POPPA’s mentoring component, he is finally getting the direction and support he needs as a young man.

Guest speaker Montoya Graham told the graduates, “the way we see ourselves is how we expect the world to treat us,” and he urged the young men to respect themselves for learning from their mistakes.

“Many of you have been labeled “delinquent,” “problem child,” “gang banger” and this is sometimes how you act. But you don’t have to accept these titles. Don’t let the world define you. Prove to them that their perception of you is wrong. Learn what your dreams and aspirations are. If you don’t, others will define you. If you believe you can change, you will.”

That’s the kind of message Napa’s young men need to hear; and it is one they are hearing, either at home or in programs like POPPA. Those who receive the message at home from their parents are lucky. Those who receive it through programs like POPPA are also fortunate.

Guiding Teens into Fatherhood

By Leland Daniels, Mentor Coordinator, Riverside County YMAF

Feeding a baby, changing diapers and finding a reliable babysitter can be overwhelming. Especially if you’re a teen father. But for Abel Guerrero, these duties are part of his most important job – building a relationship with his 21-month-old son, Abel Jr.

“We watch TV, I push him on the swing and we fly kites together,” said Guerrero, 18, of Riverside. “I’m really glad that I’m being responsible for my son.”

Standing up and taking responsibility is a thread that runs through the *Young Men As Fathers* (YMAF) program, a 12-week course held at high schools throughout Riverside County and sponsored by the County Office of Education and the California Youth Authority (YA).

About 150 boys and men are in the program in any given semester. Guerrero said he took the course when he was 16 after finding out he was going to be a father. “I kind of freaked out when she was pregnant and I didn’t know what to do,” he said. “But the class just backed up the idea that I need to be there for my girlfriend and my son”

The program teaches young men, barely past childhood themselves, the perils and joy of having children, with the aim of helping them step into the demanding role of fatherhood. “A lot of people don’t even think about the dads,” said Ingrid Sanden, spokeswoman for the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, based in Washington D.C. “The importance of teaching boys about fatherhood even before they become dads is a step of instilling responsibility. There are a lot of programs out there for teen mothers but the teen dads are often overlooked.”

The YMAF program was conceived in the state’s juvenile prison system in

1992. State officials found the program to be so successful that it spread to county education offices. The program cost about \$200,000 to operate a year and was funded through grants from the Youth Authority’s Office of Prevention and Victims Services.

Teen fathers face an especially daunting challenge in raising children if they have criminal records, lack role models or don’t have emotional support from their families. Family support for teen fathers is very important because it inspires them to become responsible.

Research on males and sexual responsibility indicates that they generally know less about sexuality, contraception and pregnancy than females, according to the State Department of Health Services’ Office of Family Planning.

Despite a lack of steady income and unstable relationships with their children’s mothers, many of the young men in the program say that they are proud and grateful that they stuck around to experience fatherhood.

Nearly two years after his son’s birth, Abel Guerrero said he’s straightened out his life. He graduated from La Sierra Community Day School in March 2001, and married his son’s mother one month later.

“Being a father is the best thing that ever happened to me,” Guerrero said. “Holding my son and playing with him is the greatest reward of all.”

A young father practices parenting skills with “programmable baby.”

Orange County Tattoo Removal Program...(From Page 6)

The Orange County Probation Department, in conjunction with Saint Joseph’s Hospital in the city of Orange, has been making stories like Robert’s a reality. Operating on a small scale since 1996, a grant provided by the California Youth Authority two years ago has allowed the program to expand to the point where many more young people in the Orange County community have received low-cost or no-cost tattoo removal treatments in the past two years.

To date, 204 tattoos have been removed from over 100 patients. Each month an average of 11 new patients (one under the age of 18) are admitted into the program. Currently, there are 62 program participants (33 men and 29 women) who receive an average of 188 treatments per month.

The main focus is to remove visible, stigmatizing tattoos that are a barrier to employment or promotional opportunities. Early in this program, a Tattoo Removal Hotline was established where interested community members could call and receive information about the program and enrollment. The hotline was advertised countywide and made its way into many local resource directories. This hotline has proven to be very popular as evidenced by the many calls made to the hotline daily.

A classic success story for this program is “Steven.” He is a long-time recovering alcohol and drug addict. In his mind, he was clean on the inside but not on the outside. “I’d get up in the morning feeling great,” he said. “But the

garbage that I’d put on my body was still there.” Then he heard about the CYA-funded Orange County Probation Tattoo Removal Program and was convinced it was heaven sent. Now, six years and 26 treatments later, Steven has turned his life around. He has a good union job that pays him a better wage than he could have imagined. Perhaps more importantly, his new look and his new job have allowed him to become a stable influence within his family. He credits much of this to the tattoo removal program.

The Orange County Tattoo Removal Program draws between 10 and 20 calls a day from people like Robert and Steven. From these calls, about 30 people attend an enrollment meeting held on the first Monday of every month. Volunteer doctors at a clinic run by Saint Joseph’s Hospital provide the treatment. The treatment all takes place with equipment provided by the Youth Authority. In fact, Orange County is one of four counties that YA has provided with laser tattoo removal machines.

Forty people are on the waiting list for this program. Many people in the program, and on the waiting list, report getting their tattoos at a young age, sometimes even as young as 10 or 11-years-old. They have cited a number of reasons for wanting tattoos removed including to: secure employment; gain a promotion from within their existing employment; enter a new profession; be a good role model for their children; and be more accepted in mainstream society.

Most program participants are steadfastly committed to receiving these services and anxiously await the day they are completely free of their stigmatizing tattoos.

An Overview of YA’s Gang Violence Reduction Project

GANG BEHAVIORS: WHAT TO LOOK FOR AND WHAT YOU CAN DO

By Harvey Casillas, Delinquency Prevention Specialist
Office of Prevention and Victims Services

The Office of Prevention and Victims Services administers the Gang Violence Reduction Project (GVRP), as part of the Youth Authority’s (YA) effort to assist local communities in delinquency prevention. The GVRP involves a joint effort between public and private agencies and is modeled after the successful East Los Angeles Community Gang Reduction Project, which has been in operation since 1976.

The GVRP is a prevention program, which focuses on reducing gang activity and crime through education, training, and special services to at-risk youth. The goal of the GVRP is to alert youth to the negative consequences of gang activity and discourage them from joining gangs.

The five key components of the GVRP are: gang/conflict mediation, alternative activities for at-risk youth, information sharing between law enforcement and government agencies, community service, and victims services and education.

The YA currently funds the following GVRPs to increase services to at-risk youth in their communities: East Los Angeles, San Diego, Tulare County, and Monterey County. Since the beginning of the GVRP, the YA has fielded many questions regarding gangs and gang membership. Listed are commonly asked questions about gangs along with answers to the questions. The YA’s Delinquency Prevention Division strongly believes that awareness and education are key solutions to the gang problem; and we hope this will help you better understand and recognize the gang phenomenon that currently exists in our communities.

What is a gang?

- A group of persons working toward unlawful or anti-social ends
- The group normally takes on a common name
- A group of individuals who may or may not claim control over certain territory in the community
- Gangs normally commit crimes, which increase their profit or reputation
- Gangs also commit crimes out of revenge or retaliation

Why do youth join gangs?

- **Identity, attention, and status:** Gangs may offer kids a powerful group identity and a kind of recognition
- **Protection:** If there are many gangs in an area, joining one of them may offer protection from rival gangs
- **Feeling of belonging:** Gang activity may offer a feeling of being part of a “family.” The child becomes loyal to the gang’s values, rather than those of the home
- **Intimidation:** Threats and violent beatings may be used to force youths to join
- **Excitement:** Gang activity may seem attractive to kids who are bored, lack interests and direction, or do not feel good about themselves. The media has glamorized gangs in music, movies, and video games, which adds to the excitement associated with them
- **Peer pressure:** Kids are pressured to join gangs if others around them are gang members
- **Lack of knowledge:** Kids, especially young ones, do not realize the true dangers of being in a gang

How do you identify gang members?

- Admits his or her gang membership in a known gang
- Has tattoos, wears or possesses clothing and paraphernalia that is associated to a specific gang
- Commits gang–related crime with known gang members
- Gang members normally project an arrogant and defiant attitude in an attempt to intimidate others
- Gangs use graffiti to identify themselves and their territory and to communicate messages

What are the early warning signs of gang involvement?

- Change in attitude to include violent reactions, disruptive behavior, dislike and refusal to submit to authority (parents, school, and police)
- Associates with members of a street gang on several occasions
- Becomes secretive regarding whereabouts and activities
- Change in friends and does not bring friends home
- School attendance becomes sporadic, and grades begin to decline
- Change in clothing selection such as style, color or type. Friends or associates will dress similar. Clothing may be altered with gang writing
- Increase in gang-type graffiti on school books, notebooks, or other papers

Effects of gang violence on victims:

The following are unique characteristics shared by victims of gang violence:

- Often live with or among their perpetrators after the crime
- Victims and witnesses must often face the entire gang, as opposed to a sole perpetrator
- They are frequently intimidated into not cooperating with the criminal justice system
- Many victims and survivors confront a lack of sympathy and services from the criminal justice system because it is believed that they have contributed to the crime in some way
- Gang violence victims often live in fear for their own safety and the safety of their family members

What can you do?

As a parent you can:

- Increase your awareness of your child’s belongings, clothes, and room
- Be involved in the lives of your children
- Talk calmly with your child no matter how upset the possibility of gang membership is to you
- Give your children a sense of belonging and build up their self-esteem by praising their accomplishments
- Recognize that gang membership is not just the child’s problem, it’s the family’s

problem as well

- Redefine the rules your child must follow and enforce them

As an individual you can:

- Learn more about gangs by reading or attending gang awareness workshops
- Contact your local law enforcement agency for up-to-date information
- Remove gang graffiti
- Ensure that youth have recreational and after-school programs

Additional Resources: School Counselors; Local Police Gang Unit; Social Service Agencies; Health Professionals; Clergy; and Counselors.

We hope this information will assist you in better understanding gangs, the gang member, and in the development of prevention and intervention programs. We have attempted to answer the most commonly asked questions regarding gangs. The YA encourages citizens to become involved in projects that are intended to abate, deter, and prevent our youth from falling prey to apathy, drugs, gangs, incarceration and death. Let’s keep a positive outlook and work together as a community to put a stop to gangs and their violent activities.

If you would like additional information, please call the Office of Prevention and Victims Services at (916) 262-1392. For more information on the GVRP sites, please contact the following:

East Los Angeles GVRP

Dan Almaraz, President, Community Gang Reduction Project (323) 261-1555

Monterey County GVRP

Lt. John Calzada, Monterey County Sheriff’s Department (831) 755-3761

San Diego GVRP

Officer Ben Jolly, San Diego Police Department (619) 525-8400

Tulare County GVRP

Mary Alice Escarsega, Community Initiatives Director, Community Services and Employment Training (C-SET) (559) 732-4194

Kenny Q...(From Page 1)

on gangs, maintained a good networking system with other law enforcement agencies throughout California, and was often praised for his ability to testify in court as a gang expert.


Kenny Q. received several commendations for his work with gangs over the years, including the Youth Authority Education Advocate Award for 1999 and a nomination for the Governor’s Employee Safety Award. Last year, at the California Probation, Parole, and Correctional Association Conference, Director Harper presented him with the Department’s Distinguished Service Award for his outstanding commitment and dedication as the Gang Information Coordinator at O.H. Close.

Kenny Q. had an amazing amount of humility when it came to receiving recognition for what he loved doing. Those who knew him best say he just went about his duties quietly and remained committed to his work whenever he was complimented. What was most important to him was that his peers, supervisors, and the wards he worked with clearly recognized and appreciated the work he did. He was a great resource to the CYA. He willingly shared his knowledge on gangs with other staff to help create a safe and healthy environment. He also assisted other law enforcement agencies on their efforts to control crime and delinquency by sharing his knowledge with them.

However, his best work was with the wards. He treated them with dignity and respect, and gave them the opportunity to grow and change. For example, every Friday morning before school he would sit on a bench and share a burrito with a ward who was always getting into trouble. Kenny Q. would listen to him and help him work out his problems. This ward had a hard time listening to his teachers and living unit staff, but on Fridays, Kenny Q. listened to him. Subsequently, the ward became a model ward on his dorm. This was Kenny Q. at his best.

On June 19, 2001, approximately 500 former and current co-workers, supervisors and managers, staff from local law enforcement agencies, wards, friends and family gathered at the Youth Authority Training Center in Stockton to pay their last respects and to reflect on how much he was truly appreciated. Kenny Q. will definitely be missed by all that knew him.

**SPECIAL THANKS TO THE STAFF OF THE YOUTH AUTHORITY
OFFICE OF PREVENTION AND VICTIMS SERVICES
DELINQUENCY PREVENTION DIVISION FOR COLLECTING AND
WRITING THE ARTICLES FOR THIS EDITION!**



Today
Over 50 Years of Service to the People of California

CALIFORNIA YOUTH AUTHORITY
CYA TODAY
Official Quarterly Youth Authority Newsletter

State of California
Gray Davis
Governor

Youth and Adult Correctional Agency
Robert Presley
Secretary

Department of the Youth Authority
Jerry L. Harper
Director
Richard Kai
Chief Deputy Director

Communications Office
George Kostyrko
Assistant Director/Executive Editor
Sarah Ludeman
Special Edition Editor
Julio Calderon
Contributor
Marguerite Rylander
Production

4241 Williamsborough Dr.
Sacramento, CA 95823-2088
916.262.1473
www.cya.ca.gov

8 Prevention Special Edition 2001